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RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4652
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [ER](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: ERITREA'S SUDANESE VENTURE CONTINUES WITH DARFUR

REF: A. KHARTOUM 02454 B. KHARTOUM 02479

Classified By: CDA Jennifer A. McIntyre, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Since the visits of Sudanese VP Salva Kiir and a National Congress Party (NCP) delegation in late August, rumors have been circulating about an Eritrean-hosted DPA non-signatories conference. With the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) initiative to host a Darfur meeting in Yey seemingly fallen by the wayside, a GSE-led initiative seems to be moving forward, perhaps beginning as early as next week. Darfur non-signatory representatives are beginning to gather in Asmara. Yemane Ghebreab, the Eritrean mediator for the concluding GNU/Eastern Front talks, told the Ambassador on October 5 that the GSE is willing to play mediator in bringing all the DPA non-signatories together to find a lasting solution to the problems of Darfur. While Ghebreab claims the GSE would work from the DPA in negotiations, the results of a GSE-led mediation is impossible to predict. Like the Eastern Front/GNU mediation, the Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) is unlikely to invite the international community to participate or observe the talks, limiting the community's ability to influence the final outcome. End Summary.

ABDULWAHID EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR ERITREA AND THE NRF

¶2. (C) In a recent interview given in Asharq Al Awsat (Ref A) as

well as in an al-Jazeera television interview, Abdulwahid Al Nur explained that he supports Eritrea in the role of negotiator between the DPA non-signatories, commenting that "no country in the world is more competent than Eritrea to be a mediator between us (Darfurians) and the GOS." Moreover, he claimed in both interviews that all of the Darfur factions were united and aligned with the NRF. In recent meetings with the diplomatic community, including his recent meeting with EU Special Envoy for Sudan Pekka Haavisto, Abdulwahid attended with Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) representatives in tow -- an interesting development given Abdulwahid's rhetoric of just two months ago when he claimed that there were irreconcilable differences between him and JEM leader, Khalil Ibrahim. While Abdulwahid appears to be cozying up to the NRF, Ahmed Abdel Shaffi continues to hold his ground as an SLM leader. Shaffi has also intimated that he would be willing to participate in a GSE-hosted conference to unite the DPA non-signatories.

HAIL, HAIL, THE GANG'S ALL HERE

13. (C) DPA non-signatories continue to filter in. Over the last week, Sharif Harir and Ahmed Diraige arrived in Asmara joining Abdulwahid and Shaffi who have been resident since June. The Dutch Embassy informed Emboff that they issued Abdulwahid a Schengen visa in his fake Eritrean passport on October 11, after heavy pressure to do so by the French Ambassador. They believe Abdulwahid intends to travel to Paris on the earliest flight but plans to return to Asmara in time for the start of any meetings. Khamis Abdalla Abakar is expected to arrive in the coming days, while Khalil Ibrahim's travel is reportedly being delayed by the French authorities in Paris over a passport renewal, but he is expected in Asmara soon as well. All of the Darfurians have been invited to Asmara under the pretext that the GSE will be hosting a meeting aimed at uniting all of the DPA non-signatories under a common umbrella and position. Sudanese sources say that all the non-signatories have been invited the signing of the Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement (ESPA) this Saturday, October 14.

SPLM AND NCP COURTING GSE

14. (C) Reports from a number of Sudanese experts claim that both the SPLM visit and the NCP delegation which visited Asmara in late August came here with the goal of courting the GSE regarding their proposals for a solution to Darfur. Kiir supposedly met with President Isaias and briefed him on the SPLM initiative to invite

all the DPA non-signatories along with the NCP and the GSE to Yey to find a solution to the Darfur crisis. While Isaias was supportive of the proposal, inside sources claim that Bashir quashed the SPLM initiative on Kiir's return to Khartoum. Only days later, the NCP sent their own delegation lead by Nafi ali Nafi to Asmara August 25-27, and told the GSE that they would deliver all of the Darfur leaders and allow the GSE to take the lead in a DPA non-signatory conference -- if and only if -- the SPLM was excluded from such a conference.

15. (C) On October 10, Emboff was told by a Sudanese contact that on October 7-9, NCP officials Saleh Gosh and Mustafa Osman Ismael brought a message from President Bashir asking the GSE to take the lead in mediating between the Government of National Unity (GNU) and DPA non-signatories. While the extent of the SPLM's role in a future mediation is still in question, the NCP has realized that their initial push for a quiet mediation has failed and the SPLM will have to play some role, albeit most likely a minor one. The same Sudanese source claims that this mediation could begin as early as next week. He expects that the DPA non-signatories will hold a short informal meeting before the talks to reach agreement on their negotiating position.

GSE'S TAKE ON DARFUR -----

16. (C) In a meeting with the Ambassador on October 5, Yemane Ghebreab, the GSE mediator on Eastern Sudan, confirmed that the GSE would take the lead in negotiating an agreement between the DPA non-signatories and the GNU if they were asked to do so by all parties. He hinted that both the SPLM and NCP had approached the GSE with separate proposals. Ghebreab reiterated previous statements that the GSE first needed to finish with the Eastern Sudan negotiations and then could turn its attention to Darfur, if needed. He did not specify any timeframes for a Darfur meeting or conference. Ghebreab did state that they would not attempt to create a new agreement from scratch, but instead build on the current DPA and amend it with items focused on issues of concern that were not addressed in the earlier agreement. While Ghebreab said the GSE was aware of other conference proposals being discussed, he did not offer any support for these initiatives. Similarly, he did not comment on whether the international community would have a role in a future GSE-led mediation between the GNU and DPA non-signatories.

COMMENT -----

17. (C) The Eritreans continue to solidify their role as a key player in Sudan. Now that the Eastern Sudan issue appears

almost
wrapped up, the GSE's focus on Darfur is becoming more
intense. A
GSE-led mediation is an almost certainty in the near future.
We
are hearing around town that neither the DPA non-signatories
nor
GNU itself are entertaining any alternative conference
proposals
at this time. Post anticipates that the international
community
will not be invited to participate or observe a GSE-led
conference. While Ghebreab seemed sincere about the GSE's
intention to use the DPA as the baseline from which to
mediate,
post and the other diplomatic missions in town remain wary
about
the potential outcomes of a process over which the
international
community will have no influence.
MCINTYRE